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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/784,691	02/23/2004	Stephen Anderson	010756.104556 (MSFT29)	1343
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MERCHANT & GOULD (MICROSOFT)			EXAMINER	
P.O. BOX 2903			TODD, GREGORY G	
MINNEAPOLIS, MN 55402-0903				
			ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
			2457	
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			11/25/2008	PAPER

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

10/784,691

Applicant(s)

ANDERSON ET AL.

Examiner

GREGORY G. TODD

Art Unit

2457

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --
Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 14 August 2008.
- 2a) ☒ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☐ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-21 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-21 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) ☐ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SF/ICE)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____
- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application
- 6) ☐ Other: _____

DETAILED ACTION

Response to Amendment

1. This office action is in response to applicant's supplemental amendment filed, 14 August 2008, of application filed, with the above serial number, on 23 February 2004 in which claims 1, 3, 5, 9-11, 13-18, 20, and 21 have been amended. Claims 1-21 are pending in the application.

Information Disclosure Statement

2. The information disclosure statements filed 04 May 2006 and 23 August 2006 fail to comply with the provisions of 37 CFR 1.97, 1.98 and MPEP § 609 because they do not have a list or anything for the Examiner to consider. It has been placed in the application file, but the information referred to therein has not been considered as to the merits. Applicant is advised that the date of any re-submission of any item of information contained in this information disclosure statement or the submission of any missing element(s) will be the date of submission for purposes of determining compliance with the requirements based on the time of filing the statement, including all certification requirements for statements under 37 CFR 1.97(e). See MPEP § 609.05(a).

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

3. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

4. Claims 1-21 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Bates et al (hereinafter "Bates", 6,807,566) in view of Rose et al (hereinafter "Rose", 5,724,567).

As per Claim 1, Bates teaches a method for deleting threads from a discussion group comprising a plurality of posts, comprising:
receiving a rating from at least one user whether the post was useful (at least Fig. 2; col. 5:10-24; 5:47-6:7; message rating);
determining whether at least one user has rated at least one post within the thread as useful (at least col. 5:10-24; 5:47-6:7; positive feedback);
if at least one user has rated at least one post as useful, retaining the thread; and if at least one user has not rated at least one post as useful, then deleting the thread (at least col. 5:10-24; 5:47-6:7; retaining and displaying messages having a rating above a threshold).

Bates fails to explicitly teach deleting the thread from the discussion group. However, the use and advantages for using such a system is well known to one skilled in the art at the time the invention was made as evidenced by the teachings of Rose. Rose teaches it being very typical in a bulletin board system for items of information posted to expire after some time period and after expiring, being deleted (at least col. 1:31-40). Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art, at the time the invention was made, to incorporate the use of Rose's time-expired post

deletion into Bates selective post display, as Rose teaches such message deletion is necessary lest large volumes of messages must be sifted through to find something of interest (col. 1:48-65); The claim would have been obvious because the substitution of Rose's deletion for Bates' hiding would have yielded predictable results to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention.

As per Claim 2. The method of claim 1, further comprising setting a delete date associated with the thread to a predetermined value (at least col. 7:47-56; message past certain amount of time).

As per Claim 3. The method of claim 2, wherein retaining the thread comprises resetting the delete date of the thread to the predetermined value (at least col. 5:10-24; 5:47-6:7; retaining and displaying messages having a rating above a threshold with col. 7:47-56; adjusted rating according to time).

As per Claim 4. The method of claim 3, wherein retaining the thread comprises leaving the delete date of the post unchanged (at least col. 5:10-63); .

As per Claim 5. The method of claim 3, wherein deleting the thread comprises: determining whether the delete date of at least one post is equal to the current date; and deleting the thread if the delete date is equal to the current date (at least col. 7:47-56; stale and not displayed).

As per Claim 6. The method of claim 1, wherein determining whether at least one user has rated at least one post within the thread, comprises: storing the rating value in a field associated with the post (at least Fig. 2); and determining whether the user has affirmatively rated the post as positive (at least col.

6:1-40; positive feedback rating).

As per Claim 7. The method of claim 6, wherein determining whether the rating field has a value indicative of a positive response, comprises:

determining whether at least one person opened the post (at least col. 6:1-40; positive comment response); and

storing a positive value in the rating field associated with the post (at least Fig. 2; col. 6:1-40; positive feedback rating).

As per Claim 8. The method of claim 7, wherein determining whether the rating field has a value indicative of a positive response further comprises:

determining whether the user provided a positive response in response to an inquiry whether the post was useful (at least col. 6:1-40; positive feedback rating).

As per Claim 9. The method of claim 2, wherein setting the delete date to a predetermined value comprises:

determining the type of the thread (at least col. 5:61-7:34; event querying);

if the thread is a first type then setting the delete date of the thread to a first predefined value (at least col. 5:61-7:34);

if the thread is a second type then the setting the delete date of the thread to a second predefined value (at least col. 5:61-7:34),

wherein the first predefined value is less than the second predefined value (at least col. 5:61-7:34).

As per Claim 10. The method of claim 9, wherein the first type of thread comprises at least one of Question/Answer-type thread and Feedback-type threads (at least col. 6:1-

7:34; message).

As per Claim 11. The method of claim 9, wherein the second type of thread comprises a General Comment-type post (at least col. 6:1-7:34; eg. content).

As per Claim 12. The method of claim 1, further comprising:
displaying each post and the rating for each post on a display device (at least Fig. 2;
col. 5:10-63; display).

Claims 13-21 do not, in substance, add or define any additional limitations over claims 1-12 and therefore are rejected for similar reasons.

Response to Arguments

5. Applicant's arguments with respect to claims 1, 13, and 17 and their dependent claims, have been considered but are moot in view of the new ground(s) of rejection. Applicant's amendment necessitated the new ground(s) of rejection presented in this Office action.

Conclusion

6. Applicant's amendment necessitated the new ground(s) of rejection presented in this Office action. Accordingly, **THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL**. See MPEP § 706.07(a). Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire THREE MONTHS from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within

TWO MONTHS of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the THREE-MONTH shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than SIX MONTHS from the date of this final action.

7. The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure. Newly cited Elken, Anderson, Ogilvie et al, and Omoigui, in addition to previously cited Willis, Ginn, and Suzuki, are cited for disclosing pertinent information related to the claimed invention. Applicants are requested to consider the prior art references for relevant teachings when responding to this office action.

8. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to GREGORY G. TODD whose telephone number is (571)272-4011. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday - Friday 9:00am-6:00pm w/ first Fridays off.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Ario Etienne can be reached on (571)272-4001. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

/G. G. T./
Examiner, Art Unit 2457

/LaShonda T Jacobs/
Primary Examiner, Art Unit 2457